

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1 - 19 (Canceled).

20. (Currently Amended) Apparatus at a vehicle location for validating a vehicle operator to operate ~~selected~~ functions of a vehicle, comprising:

an input device for entry of vehicle operator identification information;

a transceiver for transmitting said vehicle operator identification information to a remote location for validation and receiving, from said remote location, a reply message; ~~specifying which of said selected~~

a processor for examining said reply message to determine one or more functions of the vehicle that the vehicle operator is validated to operate and specifying, wherein the reply message specifies at least one action to be taken to indicate the validation to the vehicle operator;

and means for enabling said ~~selected~~ one or more functions and the at least one action specified by said reply message.

21. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a headlight of said vehicle.

22. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a tail light of said vehicle.

23. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a vehicle interior light of said vehicle.

24. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the at least one action comprises sounding a horn of said vehicle.

25. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein said ~~selected~~ one or more functions comprise an impairing operation of ~~[[a]]~~ said vehicle ~~associated with said apparatus~~.

26. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 25 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises preventing said vehicle from starting.

27. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 25 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises disabling a vehicle ignition system.

28. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 25 wherein said ~~selected~~ one or more functions comprise impairing a fuel system of said vehicle.

29. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 25 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises impairing a vehicle transmission.

30. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 29 wherein ~~[[said]]~~ impairing ~~[[a]]~~ said vehicle transmission comprises limiting ~~[[the]]~~ a number of gears that may be used during operation of said vehicle.

31. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein said ~~selected~~ one or more function are selected from a group consisting of enabling an operation of the vehicle, specifying a time during which the vehicle may be operated, enabling the vehicle to be started~~[[;]]~~ , enabling an ignition system of the vehicle, enabling a fuel system of the vehicle, ~~[[and]]~~ limiting a number of gears that may be used, during operation of the vehicle, and establishing a distance over which the vehicle may be driven.

32. (Currently Amended) Apparatus at a vehicle location for validating a vehicle operator to operate ~~selected~~ functions of a vehicle, comprising:

an input device for entry of vehicle operator identification information;

a transceiver for transmitting a message to a remote location at which one or more vehicle functions are selected based upon said operator identification information, and receiving, from said remote location, a reply message; ~~specifying which of said selected~~

a processor for examining said reply message to determine said one or more vehicle functions that the vehicle operator is validated to operate and specifying , wherein the reply message specifies at least one action to be taken to indicate the validation to the vehicle operator;

and means for enabling said ~~selected~~ one or more vehicle functions and the at least one action specified by said reply message.

33. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a headlight of said vehicle.

34. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a tail light of said vehicle.

35. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a vehicle interior light of said vehicle.

36. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein the at least one action comprises sounding a horn of said vehicle.

37. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein said ~~selected~~ one or more vehicle functions comprise an impairing operation of ~~[[a]]~~ said vehicle ~~associated with said apparatus.~~

38. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 37 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises preventing said vehicle from starting.

39. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 37 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises disabling a vehicle ignition system.

40. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim [[37]] 32 wherein said ~~selected~~ one or more vehicle functions comprise impairing a fuel system of said vehicle.

41. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 37 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises impairing a vehicle transmission.

42. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 41 wherein said impairing a vehicle transmission comprises limiting [[the]] a number of gears that may be used during operation of said vehicle.

43. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein said ~~selected~~ one or more vehicle functions are selected from a group consisting of enabling an operation of the vehicle, specifying a time during which the vehicle may be operated, enabling the vehicle to be started[[;]] a enabling an ignition system of the vehicle, enabling a fuel system of the vehicle, [[and]] limiting a number of gears that may be used during operation of the vehicle, and establishing a distance over which the vehicle may be driven.

44. (Currently Amended) A method for validating a vehicle operator to operate ~~selected~~ functions of a vehicle, comprising:

~~entering~~ receiving vehicle operator identification information into a device located at said vehicle;

transmitting said vehicle operator identification information to a remote location for validation;

receiving₁ from said remote location₁ a reply message; ~~specifying which of said selected~~
examining said reply message to determine one or more functions of the vehicle that the
vehicle operator is validated to operate ~~and specifying~~ , wherein the reply message specifies at least one action to be taken to indicate the validation to the vehicle operator; and

enabling said ~~selected~~ one or more functions and the at least one action specified by said reply message.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the at least one action comprises sounding a horn of said vehicle.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a headlight of said vehicle.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a tail light of said vehicle.

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing an interior light of said vehicle.

49. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 44 wherein said ~~selected~~ one or more functions comprise an impairing operation of ~~[[a]]~~ said vehicle ~~associated with said apparatus~~.

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 49 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises preventing said vehicle from starting.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 49 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises disabling a vehicle ignition system.

52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 49 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises impairing a vehicle fuel system.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 49 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises impairing a vehicle transmission.

54. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 53 wherein ~~said~~ impairing operation ~~of a~~ said vehicle transmission comprises limiting ~~[[the]]~~ a number of gears that may be used during operation of said vehicle.

55. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 44 wherein said ~~selected~~ one or more functions are selected from a group consisting of enabling an operation of the vehicle, specifying a time during which the vehicle may be operated, enabling the vehicle to be started~~[[;]]~~ , enabling an ignition system of the vehicle, enabling a fuel system of the vehicle, ~~[[and]]~~ limiting

a number of gears that may be used during operation of the vehicle, and establishing a distance over which the vehicle may be driven.

56. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the reply message further specifies at least one message for the vehicle operator.

57. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 56, wherein the at least one message comprises at least one of a route of travel for the vehicle, an itinerary for the vehicle, and a personal message for the vehicle operator.

58. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein the reply message further specifies at least one message for the vehicle operator.

59. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 58, wherein the at least one message comprises at least one of a route of travel for the vehicle, an itinerary for the vehicle, and a personal message for the vehicle operator.

60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44, wherein the reply message further specifies at least one message for the vehicle operator.

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60, wherein the at least one message comprises at least one of a route of travel for the vehicle, an itinerary for the vehicle, and a personal message for the vehicle operator.

62. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for validating, at a remote location, a vehicle operator to operate ~~selected~~ functions of a vehicle, comprising:

a transceiver configured to receive ~~vehicle operator~~ identification information of the vehicle operator, and configured to transmit a reply message to the vehicle; and

a processor configured to validate the vehicle operator based on the identification information, configured to determine, based on the identification information, one or more functions of the vehicle that the vehicle operator is validated to operate, configured to generate the reply message ~~specifying which of said selected~~ that specifies the one or more functions the operator is validated to operate, ~~[[and]]~~ configured to generate a notification of the validation, and configured to transmit the notification to a third party.

63. (Currently Amended) A method for validating, at a remote location, a vehicle operator to operate ~~selected~~ functions of a vehicle, comprising:

receiving ~~vehicle operator~~ identification information of the vehicle operator;

validating the vehicle operator based on the identification information;

determining, based on the identification information, one or more functions of the vehicle that the vehicle operator is validated to operate;

generating a reply message ~~specifying which of said selected~~ that specifies the one or more functions the operator is validated to operate;

transmitting the reply message to the vehicle; and

generating a notification of the validation for a third party.